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WARS WITHOUT PASSION.
HOW TECHNOLOGY IS TRYING TO TRANSFORM THE CLAUSEWITZIAN TRINITY

by

Burke A. Tarble
Major, United States Army

A paper submitted to the Faculty of the Naval War College in partial satisfaction of the requirements of the Department of Joint Military Operations.

The contents of this paper reflect my own personal views and are not necessarily endorsed by the Naval War College or the Department of the Navy.

Signature Burke A. Tarble

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Signature _____

Professor John Ballard
Professor, JMO Department

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Abstract

Operations Desert Fox and Allied Force not only showed that the US could conduct offensive military actions without suffering any friendly casualties, but that these activities could occur without the involvement of the American people. This paper attempts to show that such approaches are both shortsighted and dangerous. The idea that wars can be fought in an antiseptic manner sets up unrealistic expectations for policymakers and the American people. These types of wars can also lead to strategic overstep, improper force structure, unwanted cultural changes within the military, and a scripted US response in crisis situations that may not be all that difficult to defeat by an astute adversary.

Introduction.

It has been a long held view that the United States is casualty averse and that this aversion endangers its ability to use military force to achieve national goals and protect national interests. Why then have military actions in recent years been increasing rather than decreasing? The primary reason for this increase in the use of force has been the codification of a new American way of war. This new way of waging war, which escapes the policymaker's nightmare of risking public rejection of high casualties for limited aims, was exemplified in operations Desert Fox and Allied Force. Superficially these technologies and strategies have been successful in limiting US casualties, but the United States now risks *over-use* rather than *under-use* of the military instrument. It has become far too easy to launch air strikes or cruise missile attacks for questionable national goals with little or no involvement from the people.

Clausewitz defines his remarkable trinity as the people (passion), the commander and his army (management of risk and chance), and the government (rational political aims)¹. This trinity, when functioning, becomes the basis for a nation's ability to wage war. The thesis of this paper is that the government and the military, by moving towards war in a human-less vacuum, have cut the third leg of the Clausewitzian trinity, the people, from the equation, and that is very dangerous from a military, social, and political perspective, especially within a democratic society. Clausewitz himself says that war is like an object suspended between three magnets.² By attempting to make war a dispassionate application of force to attain a political goal, we risk putting the government and the military in the position of fighting wars with the populace as mere spectators to yet another "reality" TV experience.

¹ Carl VonClausewitz, "On War," Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1976, p. 89.

² Carl VonClausewitz, *Ibid.* p. 89.

On the surface, bloodless victories sound like a very reasonable and laudable goal. Certainly the US should strive for improvements in the lethality and accuracy of its weapons systems. Limiting US casualties should always be an imperative of political and military leaders. The problem arises when this goal becomes more important than the objective. Force protection becomes a strategy in and of itself. When these weapons and strategies are used by policymakers who lack the willingness to back them up with ground troops and the support of the people (which today, it could be argued, are nearly synonymous), it encourages rather than discourages current and future enemies. Why is this? Primarily because it “telegraphs” responses and makes an unrealistic assessment of the potential of these weapons to solve political problems, which are in fact human problems, that do not always lend themselves to a technical solution. In *Modern Strategy*, Colin Gray argues that too many strategists are trained in economics and mathematics and that the country would be better served by those trained in anthropology and history.³ In other words, while it might be said that war is “anti-social” behavior, it is nonetheless the most intense of human interactions and as such it must be approached first and foremost as a contest of will. The side that understands this best and has the means to force his will on the other will win.

The suicide bombing of the USS Cole is illustrative regarding this prism through which the US currently views war. A very expensive and technologically advanced weapons platform was knocked out of action with an appalling loss of life by the most rudimentary form of attack. When the then White House National Security Advisor, Sandy Berger, was asked on *Meet the Press* whether the policy of engagement with Yemen was worth the lives of 17 sailors, he

³ Colin Gray, “Modern Strategy,” Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999.

responded by saying, "there is nothing worth the lives of our soldiers and sailors."⁴ This is a truly remarkable statement coming from *the* senior national security policy advisor to the President. The US will undoubtedly strike back at the perpetrators of this attack, but if, as Mr. Berger stated, we do so in a manner that will not put our military men and women in harm's way, we risk showing a lack of resoluteness that will not be lost on our enemies and will make further such attacks more likely rather than less likely.

The general point conveyed in the above example is that, seemingly, the US is trying to take the passion out of an inherently passionate endeavor. This not only makes it easier to use military force with greater frequency, but makes our opponents less likely to take us seriously if we are not willing to risk our own blood to achieve our goals. All these enemies need do is find a strategy that thwarts our force protection measures and we will undoubtedly reassess our methods and goals since the public will have been conditioned to expect risk free military operations.

The Casualty Aversion Myth.

Authors in influential publications such as *Foreign Affairs* assert that there is a growing aversion in both the electorate and the uniformed ranks toward incurring virtually any friendly casualties in military operations.⁵ MIT political science professors Harvey Sapolsky and Jeremy Shapiro, writing in *Parameters*, contend the US has grown ever more sensitive about casualties – our own military casualties, opponent and neutral civilian casualties, and even enemy military casualties.⁶ This argument is now taken at face value. That the US is casualty averse becomes

⁴ Sandy Berger, *Meet the Press*, October 15, 2000.

⁵ Edward Luttwak, "Post Heroic Armies," *Foreign Affairs*, 75 (July/August 1996), p. 33.

⁶ Harvey Sapolsky and Jeremy Shapiro, "Casualties, Technology, and America's Future Wars," *Parameters*, Summer 1996, p. 119.

one of those oft-repeated statements that become fact out of sheer repetition. However, there are several important studies that refute this assertion.

Prior to the Gulf War, testimony in congressional hearings, speculation by so-called military experts in the media, and statements by the Pentagon itself, all indicated that US casualties would be high. As a matter of fact, in a RAND study of public opinion polls from that time, the median response to the question how many casualties do you expect in combat operations was 48,000 dead.⁷ Yet, support for the war remained high. Support was 70% even with this supposition of tens of thousands of casualties.⁸

A survey released in 1999 by the Triangle Institute for Strategic Studies (TISS) suggests that the public is actually more willing to absorb losses than conventional wisdom would suggest. The TISS study created three hypothetical scenarios for US military intervention. It then questioned members of the military and civilian elites, as well as average citizens as to how many casualties would be acceptable to achieve the desired end state. In all three scenarios, John Q. Public was more tolerant of casualties than his elite counterpart.⁹ For example, to "stabilize a democratic government in Congo," the public claimed a willingness to accept almost 7,000 US casualties, while both civilian and military elites answered in the hundreds.¹⁰ The interesting point of intersection between the TISS study and the RAND study is that they both show that the public will support an operation as long as the losses are proportional to the goals and these goals are in fact achievable. Because the TISS study was based on hypothetical scenarios, it misses the lack of support the public has for missions of dubious value and fuzzy end states. The RAND

⁷ Eric Larson, Dissertation, RAND, 1996, p.229

⁸ Larson, *Ibid.* p.231.

⁹ Peter Feaver and Christopher Gelpi, "A Look at Casualty Aversion: How Many Deaths Are Acceptable? A Surprising Answer," *Washington Post*, November 7, 1999, p. B3.

¹⁰ Peter D. Feaver and Christopher Gelpi, *Ibid.*, p. B3.

study, using historical case studies, shows this aversion most concretely. RAND concludes that there has not been a decline in US tolerance for casualties. Instead, the US has recently engaged in military interventions that have historically failed to command much tolerance for casualties from political leaders and the public – the perceived benefits and prospects for success were never perceived as being worth the loss of very many lives.¹¹

So the idea that the public is casualty averse is only true in the case of low interests. The use of precision strike seems to be a means to get around the low interest versus casualty aversion. My conclusion from the RAND study is that political leaders recognize this calculus and that they are not trying to avert casualties, but rather scrutiny of the intervention itself. During debate over Somalia, prior to the casualties suffered during the botched attempt to capture Muhammad Farrah Aidid, Senator Robert Byrd uttered some very prophetic words, which were in fact based on simple historical experience that remains relevant today. He said,

If a consensus cannot be achieved, our experience in Lebanon and elsewhere should tell us that US support and participation cannot be sustained. With signs of trouble or casualties, the American people will reject the operations and force a fast withdrawal. This kind of inconsistent behavior reduces the credibility of the United States around the world.¹²

The keys to public support for military operations seem to be interests, principles, human costs, and probability for success. If these factors cannot be articulated by the policymaker, the entire military operation becomes a gamble based on achieving the policy goals with near zero casualties. The onus is then placed on the CINC to build a strategy around casualty aversion so

¹¹ Eric Larson, Dissertation, RAND 1996, p.305.

¹² Eric Larson, *Ibid.*, p.273.

as not to raise the ire of the American people to call for a speedy withdrawal as occurred in Somalia. This then becomes "foreign policy on the sly."¹³

The Military Effect-Techno-killers.

The military, learning the lessons of Vietnam, decided that fighting protracted wars with limited means and without the full support of the people were to be avoided. Notice there is no mention of avoiding casualties as an overriding consideration. The Gulf War was a vindication of these lessons. While casualties were remarkably low, predictions of tens of thousands of U.S. deaths did not dissuade the American people from overwhelmingly supporting the war. Indeed, the criticality of popular support in this equation is worthy of emphasis. Success was certainly *assisted* by stealth technologies and precision strike capabilities, but success was *fulfilled* through the full mobilization of the people and a willingness to fight the enemy at bayonet point if necessary. Based on past performance in places like Vietnam and Lebanon, Saddam did not believe the US would actually fight his troops on the ground for fear of casualties. He was willing to ride out the air war until the air forces ran out of targets or bombs, or the US-led coalition ran out of resolve; whichever came first. As soon as the massive ground assault began, however, his will quickly collapsed and the war came to speedy conclusion.

Many in and out of the military didn't see the victory in those terms, however. Proponents of technology and air power espoused that the war was won not by anything so ephemeral as a cohesive trinity of passion, rationality, and chance, but by something more tangible and scientific like the microchip and sophisticated sensors. Such arguments seemed

¹³ Elaine Grossman, "US Military Debates Link Between Kosovo Air War, Stated Objectives," *Inside the Pentagon*, April 20, 2000, p. 1.

compelling given all the television images of bombs going in windows and down ventilator shafts. Russel Weigley, in the *American Way of War*, notes that, "To seek refuge in technology from hard questions of strategy and policy is another dangerous American tendency, fostered by the pragmatic qualities of the American character." Why risk American lives, some would ask, when a warhead mounted on a missile can do the same thing without the social cost of turning our children into killers? The answer is that soldiering is not just about killing. Soldiering is first and foremost about sacrifice. When you take sacrifice out of the equation you destroy the warrior ethos. As General MacArthur put it, "only those are fit to live who are not afraid to die." Once a military has lost this warrior ethos it is a very difficult thing to get back.

It is the combination of technical sophistication and the spirit to close with and destroy an enemy that makes a nation formidable and deters aggression. Once that spirit is suppressed or taken away, the deterrent value of a military force also begins to dissipate.

The Social Effect- Disengaged.

President Johnson desperately tried to limit the impact of the Vietnam War on the American people at home. He rightly believed that the case was not adequately made for large American sacrifices in defense of South Vietnam. By limiting the war's impact on the home front, he felt that the passionate support of the people could be avoided. He felt American firepower and technology would eventually knock the North Vietnamese out of the war. He could not have been more wrong. The communists understood this strategy and were quick to adapt. With only tepid support from the people and no mandate to take the war to them, the communists knew American leadership had forfeited the initiative. All they needed to do was

wait for the hollowness this policy to collapse under the pressure of continued US casualties for meaningless measures of effectiveness such as body counts and sortie rates.

Contrarily, President Bush and the military leadership during the Gulf War ensured that the American people's passions were appropriately involved from the very beginning of the conflict. This was not an easy thing to do. The Bush administration faced an uphill battle with the Congress and many influential opinion makers in the country. They never shied away from that challenge, however, and made their case to the American people and brought the Congress along in the process. The result was that the troops in the field knew that the people at home were behind them and would provide them with all the tools and support they needed to win a decisive victory. Saddam, like many in this country, misread the lessons of Vietnam. It was not that Americans were afraid to suffer casualties, they simply did not want lives wasted on ill-conceived and poorly executed policies. Essentially, the people rejected poor leadership and circumvention of their involvement in the process.

This leads us to the thesis that the US is headed back to a Johnsonian approach to war that tries to cut the public out of the process. Johnson tried to fight his war (and it became known as Johnson's war, later Nixon's) with draftees from the most "expendable" strata of American society and without involving the more socially heterogeneous reserves to keep public interest to a minimum. Today, it can be argued, an attempt is being made to use technology to achieve what Johnson could not; the complete removal of the people from war making. This sort of approach will be no more successful today than it was then. Technology and firepower without a full commitment of the people will never be enough to subdue a determined enemy.

Skeptics of the criticality of popular support during military actions will point to the operation in Kosovo as a counter-argument. There was no rallying of public opinion, no use of

ground troops, yet the mission was accomplished. All true, but it can be argued that the diplomatic maneuvering of Russia out of the Serb camp and the growing momentum for using ground troops and arming the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) were more decisive than any use of precision guided munitions (PGMs). Towards the end of the 78-day conflict pressure was mounting within NATO and from countries like China that this sort of one-sided assault from the air was both ineffective and cowardly. Arguably, had the Russians not switched sides and had NATO not started openly supporting the KLA and saber rattling about a ground operation of its own, the air operation would have failed and NATO legitimacy would have been severely damaged.

Kosovo proved that statesmen *can* slip a war under the radar screen of the public in large part because of technologies that reduce or even eliminate friendly casualties. As General Krulak so delicately put it, "We certainly never engaged the American people on the viability of such an intervention."¹⁴ It also proves, however, that this can be a very risky thing. If politicians tell the public that the wars will now be fought without them, those same leaders had best be certain that the adversary will oblige and bend to their will by bombing alone. Otherwise, that policy may have stirred up a hornet's nest that technology will not be able to overcome and that the people will not be willing to join in to put right.

The Political Effect- Shoot First, Ask Questions Later.

If the advent of high tech weapons has lowered the threshold for the use of violence in the pursuit of political goals, then this should be considered as a step backwards, not forward, in the progress of human civilization. The days when kings and potentates could use military force

on the smallest of pretexts has largely been refuted in modern times. If the advent of modern technologies allows for more military interventions into lower level political problems then this suggests need for serious revue. Robert E. Lee once said "that it was a good thing that war was so terrible, lest we grow too fond of it." If we sanitize war, at least from our perspective, do we not risk making it too appealing an option? Using missiles or bombs to send messages that might otherwise be transmitted by a diplomat are problematic for any military. Rolling Thunder, the initial phases of Allied Force, and Desert Fox are all examples of using violence to send messages instead of win wars. This type of mixed message is seldom effective. If you have to use force to send a message you already have a credibility problem that pin-prick military strikes will only exacerbate. Former Secretary of State Madeline Albright told college students in Tennessee reference the bombing that goes on to this day in Iraq, "We are talking about using military force, but we are not talking about a war. That is an important distinction."¹⁵ The threat of military force can be an effective diplomatic tool. Semantics aside, the use of violence to achieve a political goal is an act of war and we only cause trouble for ourselves when we deny this fact. Joint Publication 3-0 defines war as being when other instruments of national power (diplomatic, economic, or informational) are unable or inappropriate to achieve national objectives or protect national interests. Blurring diplomatic and military means is hugely problematic. The subtlety of a 2000-pound bomb is often lost on its recipient. The militarization of diplomacy is a precedent that we may one day regret.

There have been those in government who truly like having the flexibility to use force without having to worry about casualty reverberations undercutting their policy. Certainly, there

¹⁴ Elaine Grossman, "US Military Debates Link Between Kosovo Air War, Stated Objectives," *Inside the Pentagon*. April 20, 2000, p. 1.

¹⁵ Stephen Blank, "The Illusion of a Short War," *SAIS Review*, 20.1 (2000), p.146.

are many more in government and the military that pursue so-called "bloodless" technologies and policies not because they are trying to circumvent public scrutiny, but because they truly want to minimize both military and civilian casualties. This is laudable and such technologies serve a useful purpose when combined with a coherent strategy that encompasses the entire spectrum of military power. However, if the lessons inappropriately derived from Operation Desert Storm and reinforced by Kosovo continue to entice our politicians to use force as anything other than a last resort, then we are headed for more challenges to our power rather than fewer. Power underutilized is improvident. Power too often used is arrogance. If we do not wean ourselves from the overuse of these weapons, then surely their shortcomings will become more obvious to our adversaries as they become less obvious to ourselves. "The Great Wall, throughout the eons, appeared to the barbarians more a manifestation of the Chinese Empire's unwillingness to raise armies to guard the frontiers than it ever served as a credible "high-tech" deterrent or defensive barrier."¹⁶

Another aspect in this pursuit of technical solutions to political problems is the increased interest in non-lethal weapons such as stun guns, malodorous substances, entanglements, superadhesives, isotropic radiators, etc. These weapons are designed to increase military utility in order to provide decision-makers and military commanders the means to dominate the portion of the spectrum of force that lies between diplomacy and lethality.¹⁷ This sounds like the mind expanding, dynamic, and out-of-the-box thinking that everyone in the military is encouraged to do. Unfortunately, what will likely end up happening with this expansion of military "capability" is a further dilution of its real purpose and an excuse to introduce military forces in

¹⁶ Eikenberry, Karl W., "Take No Casualties," *Parameters*, Summer 1996, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle, PA. p. 115.

¹⁷ Lovelace and Metz, "Nonlethality and American Land Power: Strategic Context and Operational Concepts", Strategic Studies Institute, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, June 15 1998. p. V.

situations where other problem-solving devices might be more appropriate. Dr. Steven Metz in his article, *Armed Conflict in the 21st Century*, stresses that post-modern democratic militaries must extract every possible degree of precision out of new weapons and a greater emphasis on non-lethal weapons.¹⁸ Dr. Metz considers the U.S. military “encumbered” by its successes in the 1980s and 1990s and therefore resistant to further change toward greater precision and non-lethality. Along those lines other authors, like Jeffrey Record, have said, “the Army certainly has served neither itself nor the country well by hugging the Weinberger and Powell doctrines, which are prescriptions for strategic paralysis.”¹⁹ “Weinberger-Powell is not germane to the post-Cold War norm of small wars along the periphery of core US security interests or to diplomatic coercion via threatened and actual uses of force.”²⁰ Record goes on to argue that the Army needs to align itself to fight these small intra-state wars so that it does not become strategically or budgetarily insignificant.

The military should get out of the mindset that it must become more ubiquitous “across the spectrum of conflict” in order to justify its existence. This bit of salesmanship can lead to strategic overstep. The real connection between this pursuit of hi-tech PGMs and non-lethal weapons is they both are designed to make it easier to choose the military instrument to solve problems that have been traditionally approached by more diplomatic, economic, or informational means. It is up to the CJCS and the CINCs to explain to the NCA that precision strike does not obviate the need for good strategy that incorporates all the elements of national power to include the passion and interest of the people.

¹⁸ Steven Metz, “Armed Conflict in the 21st Century: The Information Revolution and Post-Modern Warfare”, *Strategic Studies Institute*, Carlisle, Pennsylvania, April 2000.

¹⁹ Jeffrey Record, “Operation Allied Force: Yet Another Wake-up Call for the Army,” *Parameters*, Winter 1999-2000, p. 16.

²⁰ Jeffrey Record, *Ibid.*, p. 16.

From 1964 until 1968, the JCS and MACV (Military Assistance Command, Vietnam) essentially abdicated their responsibility of giving sound military advice to the NCA. "CJCS General Maxwell Taylor, who thought his role was to be a 'true believer' in the foreign policy and military strategy of the administration which he served, shielded Johnson from views advanced by his less politically sensitive colleagues."²¹ "In 1964, General John McConnell, when interviewed for the position of Chief of Staff of the Air Force, promised his full support to the President even if he felt administration policies were flawed. He believed his role was to provide the NCA with 'suitable alternatives for the application of military power,' so [they] could 'choose the one that best solved the problem as they saw it.'"²² This kind of get-along mentality led to one of the worst military and political debacles in US history, one from which it took the armed forces and US foreign policy over a decade to recover. "The Joint Chiefs and the Secretary of Defense focused on means rather than ends, and on tactics rather than a strategy to connect military actions to achievable policy objectives."²³ Though this quote is about Vietnam, a similar fascination with means over ends seems to exist today. Whenever military forces are engaged, the stakes are high. Whether it be in Vietnam, Somalia, or Kosovo, the use of force carries with it far-reaching implications that go well beyond the numbers of casualties involved. War cannot be left to the technicians and the targeteers. "Strategy has to be more than servicing targets."²⁴ It is up to the NCA, the CJCS, and the CINCs working in concert to ensure this does not happen.

²¹ H.R. McMaster, "President Johnson and the Joint Chiefs," *Joint Forces Quarterly*, Autumn/Winter 1999-2000, p. 85.

²² H.R. McMaster, *Ibid.*, p. 89.

²³ H.R. McMaster, *Ibid.*, p. 85.

²⁴ Stephen Blank, "The Illusion of a Short War" *SAIS Review*, 20.1 (2000), p.137.

Adversarial Reaction.

“It is fatal to enter any war without the will to win it.” General MacArthur’s words continue to resonate through the decades. By publicizing its intolerance for casualties through such statements as Mr. Berger’s about the USS Cole, the military’s high profile investigations into force protection issues, the pursuit of such obvious casualty averse strategies as hard decks, cruise-missile-only attacks, and no ground troops declarations, the US speaks volumes about its will to win. The US also opens itself up for asymmetric counter strategies. Such strategies as terrorism and the use of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) could render the goal of quick and clean conflicts highly problematic. Sole possession of high-tech weaponry and tactics may be more limiting than helpful in such cases. “America will be targeted to deter the deployment of what hostile regimes know is still the ultimate weapon of war: a squad of infantry that can kick in the door of the presidential palace, haul down its flag, and hoist the Stars and Stripes in its place.”²⁵

Much ink has been spilled over the so-called Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA) taking place in the US. Dr. Stephen Blank of the Army War College synthesizes, somewhat derisively, much of the current thought on the RMA like this:

Long-range strike platforms, state-of-the-art sensors, and PGMs will dominate future war. Future wars will be clean with few American or foreign casualties. Immaculate coercion will thus take place with only buildings and installations being destroyed. Rapid [low cost] victory makes it possible to keep Congress and the media out of the conflict.

²⁵ William Hawkins, “Imposing Peace: Total vs. Limited Wars, and the Need to Put Boots on the Ground,” *Parameters*, Summer 2000, p. 75.

C4ISR is always the true center of gravity of any enemy and its destruction inevitably leads to victory.²⁶

In this wonderful new world Professor Blank creates for us, he goes on to say, "that war supplants politics, which no longer exist, communication equates to decision, and information equates to understanding."²⁷ The RMA is about speed and accuracy. This can allow the commander to get ahead of the enemy's decision cycle and knock out important assets to him very early in the conflict. What it is not is a stand-alone war-winning strategy. This RMA does not obviate all the principles of war or the lessons of operational art handed down from centuries of military experience.

US political leadership has embraced air power not as a joint complement to surface forces, but rather as a substitute for ground power."²⁸ This definitely simplifies the equation for any future adversaries. The Serbians certainly conducted their campaign with full knowledge of the NATO desire to minimize casualties and keep ground troops out of the fray. All the way back to the Korean War, the North Koreans, Chinese, and Soviets were able to capitalize on our self-limiting strategies, caused by a lack of resolve and commitment, to gain advantages over UN forces. The bombing of North Vietnam never put the survival of the ruling regime in danger and, by its very nature, never could. Even the much lauded Linebacker bombing offensives only got the North Vietnamese to sign a worthless piece of paper that they quickly disregarded as soon as US ground troops were pulled out of the South.

²⁶ Stephen Blank, "The Illusion of a Short War" *SAIS Review*, 20.1 (2000), p.133.

²⁷ Stephen Blank, *Ibid.*, p.137.

²⁸ Jeffrey Record, "Operation Allied Force: Yet Another Wake-up Call for the Army," *Parameters*, Winter 1999-2000, p. 15.

The US cannot count on having inept enemies such as Sadaam and Milosevic forever. Future enemies are watching and learning. Attempting to use technology as a replacement for will and good strategy is a recipe for disaster.

Conclusion.

Joint Vision 2010 and 2020 stress precision engagement and dominant maneuver. The key to future US success on the battlefield is to keep these two complementary elements in balance. That means not looking at precision engagement as a strategy in and of itself. Both elements are part of a doctrine for winning wars. Doctrine does not equal strategy. "In strategy nothing fails like success, not only because enemies adapt to your methods, but also because you become unduly persuaded of your genius or the favor of the gods."²⁹

The wrong lesson of Vietnam was that the US is casualty averse. The wrong lesson of Desert Storm was that military victories could be achieved near bloodlessly. Both these improper lessons were applied in Kosovo and Desert Fox. A competent foe would have devised and executed a strategy that struck the US center of gravity, its will, and caused an embarrassing defeat for the United States and NATO. Undoubtedly, Allied Force will stand as a powerful and alluring use-of-force precedent.³⁰ It is important however that decision-makers understand that,

War is about politics, and politics is about governing of land and people. It still takes "boots on the ground" to consolidate victory. In that respect, two millennia of scientific

²⁹ Colin Gray, "Modern Strategy," Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1999.

³⁰ Jeffrey Record, "Operation Allied Force: Yet Another Wake-up Call for the Army," *Parameters*, Winter 1999-2000, p. 15.

progress has not made the cruise missile a more effective tool of high politics than the Roman legionnaire.³¹

For the US to be successful it must not view war as something less grave and horrible than it truly is. "War is such dangerous business that the mistakes which come from kindness are the very worst."³² "Kind-hearted people might of course think there was some ingenious way to disarm or defeat an enemy without too much bloodshed, and might imagine this is the true goal of the art of war. Pleasant as it sounds, it is a fallacy that must be exposed."³³

The bottom line is that policy makers must be disabused of the notion that by avoiding casualties they can cut the people out of the Clausewitzian trinity and still have an effective policy/strategy match. This trend, started in Korea, exemplified in Vietnam, and turned away from in the Gulf War, is back in vogue today and should be relegated to the ash heap of history. War is serious business, and it should not be left strictly to the generals or the politicians. The people eventually are the ones who must pay the butcher's bill. If a policy is not worth arousing their passions, then it is not worth using force to attain. The other aspects of national power are more appropriate to interests and objectives that do not rise to the level of effort required by the government to arouse the passions of the American people. Military actions that use force to send signals, and whose overriding consideration is casualty avoidance are both dangerous and ineffective in the long run and should be avoided at all costs.

"I would hope that our beloved country will drink deep from the chalice of courage."³⁴

³¹ William Hawkins, "Imposing Peace: Total vs. Limited Wars, and the Need to Put Boots on the Ground," *Parameters*, Summer 2000, p. 78.

³² Carl VonClausewitz, "On War," Edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, 1976, p. 75.

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